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**NORTH CAROLINA CATCHES WIND OF
GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT®**

Teen Tobacco Prevention Advocates Step Up With Innovate Programs

(North Carolina) – Teen tobacco use prevention advocates across the state are participating in the Great American SmokeOut®, with local events that range from the tried-and-true to the new and innovative. But the message is clear and unified: Tobacco use is addictive to young people and must be stomped out if North Carolina is to grow stronger.

“The North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), our grantees, and our partners are planning wonderful events in their communities to support grassroots tobacco prevention activities like the Great American SmokeOut®,” said Alison K. McLaurin, HWTF’s marketing and public affairs director. “It’s important that we stress to our young people that saying ‘no’ to tobacco use, is saying ‘yes’ to good health.”

A 2003 NC Youth tobacco survey found that 65 percent of NC high school students say they have used a tobacco product, while 27 percent of NC high school students currently smoke cigarettes.

The dangers of tobacco use are impossible to ignore,” said Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, HWTF Chair. “We need to get tobacco products away from our children and out of our schools.”

According to the American Cancer Society, smokers are most successful when they have some means of support, such as nicotine replacement products, counseling, prescription medicine to lessen cravings, guide books, and the encouragement of friends and family members.

ABOUT THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT®

Every year, smokers across the nation take part in the American Cancer Society’s Great American Smokeout® by smoking less or quitting for the day on the third Thursday of November. The event challenges people to stop using tobacco and raises awareness of the many effective ways to quit for good.

ABOUT THE NC HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRUST FUND

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund makes North Carolina stronger, both physically and economically, by funding programs that promote preventive health. Created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate a portion of North Carolina’s share of the national tobacco settlement, HWTF has invested \$55 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescription drug assistance program for seniors. For more information, please visit www.hwtfc.org.

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